

(19)



Europäisches Patentamt
European Patent Office
Office européen des brevets



(11)

EP 0 968 934 B1

(12)

EUROPEAN PATENT SPECIFICATION

(45) Date of publication and mention
of the grant of the patent:
12.02.2003 Bulletin 2003/07

(51) Int Cl.7: **B65D 83/08, B65D 75/58**

(21) Application number: **99304732.3**

(22) Date of filing: **17.06.1999**

(54) Package containing stacked sheet products

Gestapelte Blattprodukte enthaltende Verpackung

Emballage contenant une pile de produits en feuille

(84) Designated Contracting States:
FR GB NL SE

(30) Priority: **17.06.1998 JP 16960698**

(43) Date of publication of application:
05.01.2000 Bulletin 2000/01

(73) Proprietor: **UNI-CHARM CORPORATION**
Kawanoe-shi Ehime-ken (JP)

(72) Inventors:
• **Bando, Takeshi, Technical Center**
Mitoyo-gun, Kanagawa-ken 769-1602 (JP)

• **Tanaka, Yoshikazu, Technical Center**
Mitoyo-gun, Kanagawa-ken 769-1602 (JP)
• **Naruse, Motokazu, Technical Center**
Mitoyo-gun, Kanagawa-ken 769-1602 (JP)

(74) Representative: **Parry, Christopher Stephen**
Saunders & Dolleymore,
9 Rickmansworth Road
Watford, Herts. WD18 0JU (GB)

(56) References cited:
EP-B- 0 420 301 **DE-U- 9 208 932**
US-A- 3 819 043 **US-A- 4 420 080**
US-A- 5 582 342

Note: Within nine months from the publication of the mention of the grant of the European patent, any person may give notice to the European Patent Office of opposition to the European patent granted. Notice of opposition shall be filed in a written reasoned statement. It shall not be deemed to have been filed until the opposition fee has been paid. (Art. 99(1) European Patent Convention).

Description

[0001] The present invention relates to a package having a plurality of sheet products stacked therein, which has an opening of a small opening area, from which the sheet products can be picked up easily.

[0002] Fig. 2(A) is a perspective view showing a conventional handy package from which stacked sheet products such as wet tissue papers can be picked up one after another. The main body of the conventional package is composed of an envelope 1 formed from, for example, a piece of laminated film, and the envelope 1 houses the stacked wet tissue papers therein.

[0003] Fig. 2(B) is a plan view showing the package in Fig. 2(A), with a lid 3 removed. An opening 2 is formed on the surface of the envelope 1, and an edge portion Sa of the uppermost one of the wet tissue papers appears therein. By pinching and pulling the edge portion Sa with two fingers through the opening 2, the wet tissue papers housed in the envelope 1 are picked up one after another. The opening 2 is formed in an oval or elliptic shape, with the major axis (i) parallel to the edge portion Sa and with the minor axis (ii) perpendicular to the edge portion Sa. In such a handy package, it should be noted that the opening area of the opening 2 is required to be as small as possible, for preventing the wet tissue paper from drying in use. In the package shown in Figs. 2(A) and 2(B), because the dimensions of the opening 2 are much larger in the direction parallel to the edge portion Sa than in the direction perpendicular to the edge portion Sa, it enables picking the wet tissue papers without providing an excessive resistance between the wet tissue papers and the edge of the opening 2. The opening 2 is usually closed with the lid 3 for preventing the wet tissue paper from drying, and opened by pulling a tab portion of the lid 3 only in use. The lid 3 has an adhesive layer such as of pressure adhesive on the side opposite to the envelope 1, and the adhesive layer enables the lid 3 to removing from and attaching to the periphery of the opening 2 repeatedly. In such a handy package, it should be also noted that the lid 3 is provided to be pulled in the lengthwise direction of the envelope 1 as shown in Figs. 2(A), because the overall size of the envelope 1 is so small.

[0004] However, the opening 2 in the conventional handy package shown in Figs. 2(A) and 2(B) has such a problem that because the dimension of the opening 2 in the direction perpendicular to the edge portion Sa (i.e. the minor axis (ii)) is too small, it is difficult to separate two fingers from each other sufficiently within the opening 2, whereby the edge portion Sa is difficult to pinch with two fingers.

[0005] Further, because the opening 2 elongates much in the lengthwise direction of the envelope 1, the lid 3 also elongates much in the same direction. Therefore, the lid 3 has to be pulled a relatively long distance to open the opening 2, and there is a possibility that the opening 2 is not sealed completely, because the lid 3 or

the envelope 1 is wrinkled when the lid 3 is attached to the periphery of the opening 2.

[0006] US-A-3819043 discloses a package having a plurality of sheet products stacked to each other therein, the package comprising an envelope for housing the stacked sheet products and having a lengthwise dimension and a widthwise dimension, the widthwise dimension being shorter than the lengthwise dimension, the envelope having an opening in which an edge portion of the uppermost one of the stacked sheet products extending in the lengthwise direction appears and through which it is pinched by fingers in use, wherein the dimensions of the opening are larger in the widthwise direction than in the lengthwise direction; the package further comprising a lid attached to the envelope adjacent the opening for opening and closing it, the lid having a base portion and a cover portion. The base portion of the lid is attached to the package alongside a side of the opening extending in the lengthwise direction. The lid is flexible so that it automatically returns to the closed position.

[0007] Document US-A-4 420 080, on which the preamble of claim 1 is based, discloses a resealable dispenser-container with a transversal opening covered by an adhesive lid.

[0008] The present invention is to solve the conventional problems as mentioned above, and an object of the present invention is to provide a package having a plurality of sheet products stacked therein, which has an opening of a small opening area, from which the sheet products can be picked up easily.

[0009] It is another object of the present invention to provide a package having a plurality of sheet products stacked therein, which is provided with a lid which can open an opening easily and can close the opening securely.

[0010] The present invention is to provide a package having a plurality of sheet products stacked to each other therein, the package comprising an envelope for housing the stacked sheet products and having a lengthwise dimension and a widthwise dimension, the widthwise dimension being shorter than the lengthwise dimension, the envelope having an opening in which an edge portion of the uppermost one of the stacked sheet products extending in the lengthwise direction appears and through which it is pinched by fingers in use, herein the dimensions of the opening are larger in the widthwise direction than in the lengthwise direction; the package further comprising a lid attached to the envelope adjacent the opening for opening and closing it, the lid having a base portion and a cover portion; characterised in that the lid has an adhesive layer thereon enabling the lid to be removed from and attached to the surface of the envelope repeatedly and in that the base portion of the lid is attached to the envelope alongside a side of the opening extending in the widthwise direction. In the above construction, it is preferred that the sheet products are wet tissue papers and the envelope is provided with a lid for the opening.

[0011] Further, the opening is preferably formed in an oval or elliptic shape. The dimensions of the opening are preferably 40 ± 3 mm and 30 ± 3 mm.

[0012] Moreover, it is preferred that the envelope is formed from a laminated film of a polyethylene terephthalate film, an aluminum and a sealant film, and the lid is formed from a biaxially oriented polypropylene film.

[0013] Embodiments of the invention are described below with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1(A) is a perspective view showing an embodiment of a package according to the present invention, Fig. 1(B) is a plan view of the package shown in Fig. 1(A) and Fig. 1(C) is a cross-sectional view of the package taken along the line C-C shown in Fig. 1(B); and

Fig. 2(A) is a perspective view showing a conventional package, Fig. 2(B) is a plan view of the package shown in Fig. 2(A).

[0014] The invention is described in more detail with reference to the accompanying drawings.

[0015] As used herein, "comprises" and all its grammatical forms specifies the presence of stated features, integers, steps or components, but does not preclude the presence or addition of one or more other features, integers, steps, components or groups thereof.

[0016] Fig. 1(A) is a perspective view showing an embodiment of a package according to the present invention, Fig. 1(B) is a plan view of the package shown in Fig. 1(A) with a lid removed, and Fig. 1(C) is a cross-sectional view of the package with the lid removed, taken along the line C-C shown in Fig. 1(B).

[0017] A package 10 shown in Figs. 1(A) to 1(C) is made handy, for example, to have the dimensions of 15 cm, 8 cm and 3 cm, in length (Y direction), width (X direction) and height (Z direction), respectively. The package 10 comprises an envelope 11, a plurality of sheet products (e.g., wet tissue papers S impregnated with water or chemicals) and a lid 13. The envelope 11 is formed from a piece of film such that the wet tissue papers S are enveloped by folding the film and then sealed therein by forming a lengthwise seal portion 11b and widthwise seal portions 11a. The envelope 11 has an opening 12 for pinching and pulling the wet tissue papers S one after another with two fingers. The lid 13 is for closing or opening the opening 12 in use.

[0018] The film forming the envelope 11 is preferably a laminated film, which is formed by laminating a PET (polyethylene terephthalate) film, an aluminum foil and a sealant film such as biaxially oriented polypropylene film having a heat-sealing property, in order from outside to inside of the envelope 11, and then joining them to one another. Alternatively, the laminated film may be formed by laminating and joining a sealant film having a heat-sealing property inside of a PET film deposited with aluminum, silica or alumina thereon. With the seal-

ant film facing inside of the envelope 11 (i.e., facing the wet tissue papers S), as described above, the lengthwise seal portion 11b and the widthwise seal portions 11a can be formed by heat-sealing (i.e., by heating the sealant film under pressure). On the surfaces of the envelope 11, for example, figures, symbols, letters such as trade name and operating instruction, etc., are printed.

[0019] Fig. 1(C) schematically shows a stacked state of the wet tissue papers S in the envelope 11, by using three pieces of wet tissue papers S1, S2 and S3. The number of the wet tissue papers S to be housed in the envelope 11 is optional. Generally, in such a handy package, the number of wet tissue papers to be housed is about 30 to 40 pieces. The wet tissue papers S1, S2 and S3 are folded respectively, and then stacked to one another such that edge portions Sa1, Sa2 and Sa3, which linearly extending in the lengthwise direction (Y direction) of the envelope 11, conform to the substantial center of the opening 12 as shown in Fig. 1(C).

[0020] The lid 13 shown in Fig. 1(A) has a tab portion 13a at one end thereof in the lengthwise direction (Y direction) of the envelope 11 and a base portion 13b at the other end thereof in the lengthwise direction (Y direction) of the envelope 11. The main body of the lid 13 is formed from a biaxially oriented polypropylene film. The lid 13 has an adhesive layer, such as of pressure sensitive adhesive, provided on the entire surface opposite to the envelope 11, except for the tab portion 13a. The pressure sensitive adhesive mainly contains an acrylic type adhesive, a polyvinyl chloride composition containing plasticizer, or a graftmer such as graft copolymer formed by graft polymerizing ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer and vinyl chloride monomer. With such pressure sensitive adhesive, the lid 13 can be removed from and attached to the surface of the envelope 11 repeatedly. When the wet tissue papers S are picked up from the opening 12 in use, the lid 13 is removed from the periphery of the opening 12 by pulling the tab portions 13a, except that the base portion 13b remains still as shown in Fig. 1(A). Then, after picking up the wet tissue papers S, the lid 13 is attached to the periphery of the opening 12 to close the opening 12.

[0021] Incidentally, the film to form the envelope 11 is formed with notches or perforations arranged in the outline of the opening 12 in advance of forming the envelope 11. In the production process of the package 10, the lid 13 is attached to the surface of the envelope 11 with the above-described adhesive layer, so as to cover the notches or perforations. When the package 10 is used for the first time, the lid 13 is pulled up while imparting the adhesive power to a portion 11c which is surrounded by the notches or perforations. Thus, the portion 11c is separated from the envelope 11 along the notches or perforations to open the opening 12 in the envelope 11. Thereafter, the portion 11c remains attached to the surface of the lid 13 as shown in Fig. 1(A). Because the envelope 11 is sealed almost completely

until the opening 12 is opened by pulling up the lid 13 for the first time, the wet tissue papers S impregnated with water or chemicals can be prevented from drying. Also, because the aluminum foil in the laminated film is impermeable to water and oxygen and has an excellent air tightness, it also contributes to the prevention of the drying of the wet tissue papers S.

[0022] The wet tissue papers S are picked up one by one from the opening 12. As shown in Fig. 1(B), the uppermost wet tissue paper S1 is exposed from the opening 12, with the edge portion Sa1 conforming to the substantial center of the opening 12. The wet tissue paper S1 is picked up by pinching and pulling the edge portion Sa1 with two fingers (e.g. thumb and forefinger) through the opening 12. In this embodiment, in order to make the opening 12 as small as possible for preventing the wet tissue papers S from drying, the opening 12 is formed in an oval or elliptic shape, with its major axis (i) perpendicular to the edge portion Sa1 and with the minor axis (ii) parallel to (identical to) the edge portion Sa1. That is, the dimensions of the opening 12 are larger in the direction perpendicular to the edge portion Sa1 than in the direction parallel to the edge portion Sa1 (i.e. larger in X direction than in Y direction). That is because the edge portion Sa1 is to be pinched with two fingers from the direction perpendicular to the edge portion Sa1.

[0023] It is preferred that the major axis (i) of the opening 12 is 40 ± 3 mm. Within this range, two fingers, which are inserted into the opening 12, can be separated from each other sufficiently within the opening 12 in the widthwise direction of the package 10. However, if it is above the upper limit, the opening area of the opening 12 becomes too large insignificantly, so that the water or chemicals contained in the wet tissue papers S is easily dried.

[0024] It is preferred that the minor axis (ii) of the opening 12 is 30 ± 3 mm. Within this range, the thumb can be inserted into the opening 12 allowing a margin. However, if it is above the upper limit, the opening area of the opening 12 becomes too large insignificantly, so that the water or chemicals contained in the wet tissue papers S is easily dried.

[0025] It should be noted that the shape of the opening 12 is not limited to an oval or elliptic shape, it may be formed in any shape such as rectangular shape so long as the dimensions of the opening 12 are larger in the direction perpendicular to the edge portion Sa1 than in the direction parallel to the edge portion Sa1. It is preferred that the dimensions -length and width- of the opening 12 in a rectangular shape are respectively 40 ± 3 mm and 30 ± 3 mm.

[0026] The lid 13 is generally provided to the envelope 11 such that the lid 13 is pulled along the lengthwise direction of the envelope 11, because the envelope 11 does not have a sufficient dimension for the lid 13 in the widthwise direction. In the embodiment of the present invention, the minor axis (ii) of the opening 12 extends along the lengthwise direction of the envelope 11. Thus,

the dimension of the lid 13 in the lengthwise direction of the envelope 11 can be made smaller, as compared with the conventional package shown in Fig. 2(A). Providing the lid 13 in such way as mentioned-above, the opening 12 can be easily opened by pulling the tab portion 13a of the lid 13 in the lengthwise direction of the envelope 11 a relatively short distance. Further, owing to the small dimension of the lid 13 in the lengthwise direction of the envelope 11, the envelope 11 or the lid 13 is prevented from being wrinkled, when the opening 12 is closed with the lid 13. Thus, the opening 12 can be completely sealed with the lid 13 for preventing the wet tissue papers S from drying.

[0027] While in the foregoing specification the present invention has been described in relation to the preferred embodiment and many details have been set forth for purpose of illustration, it should be apparent to those skilled in the art that the present invention is susceptible to additional embodiments, and that certain details described herein can be varied considerably without departing from the basic principles of the present invention.

[0028] For example, the opening 12 may be opened in the production process instead of opening the opening 12 by separating the portion 11c from the envelope 11 by pulling the lid 13 in use.

[0029] The envelope 11 may be formed from paper or may be molded of plastic material in a box shape. The material of the lid 13 can be changed in accordance with the material of the envelope 11.

[0030] The sheet products to be housed may be dry tissue papers instead of wet tissue papers. Even in the case where the sheet products are dry tissue papers, because the dimensions of the opening 12 are larger in the direction perpendicular to the edge portion Sa1 than in the direction parallel to the edge portion Sa1, the dry tissue papers are easily picked up one by one. Further, because the opening 12 is opened in a minimum area, dust or dirt is prevented from coming inside of the envelope 11 through the opening 12.

Claims

1. A package (10) having a plurality of sheet products stacked to each other therein, the package comprising an envelope (11) for housing the stacked sheet products (5) and having a lengthwise dimension and a widthwise dimension, the widthwise dimension being shorter than the lengthwise dimension, the envelope having an opening (12) in which an edge portion (Sa1) of the uppermost one of the stacked sheet products extending in the lengthwise direction (Y) appears and through which it is pinched by fingers in use,

wherein the dimensions of the opening are larger in the widthwise direction (X) than in the lengthwise direction (Y);

the package further comprising a lid (13) attached to the envelope adjacent the opening for opening and closing it, the lid having a base portion (13b) and a cover portion;

the lid having an adhesive layer thereon enabling the lid to be removed from and attached to the surface of the envelope repeatedly **characterised in that** the base portion (13b) of the lid is attached to the envelope alongside a side of the opening (12) extending in the widthwise direction (X).

2. The package of Claim 1, wherein:

the sheet products (5) are wet tissue paper.

3. The package of any preceding claim, wherein:

the opening (12) is formed in an oval or elliptic shape.

4. The package of any preceding claim, wherein:

the dimensions of the opening (12) are 40 ± 3 mm and 30 ± 3 mm.

5. The package of any preceding claim, wherein:

the adhesive layer is of a pressure sensitive adhesive.

6. The package of any preceding claim, wherein:

the envelope (10) is formed from a laminated film of a polyethylene terephthalate film, an aluminium foil and a sealant film, and the lid is formed from a biaxially oriented polypropylene film.

Patentansprüche

1. Verpackung (10), die eine Vielheit darin aneinander gestapelter Blattprodukte aufweist, wobei die Verpackung einen Umschlag (11) zum Unterbringen der gestapelten Blattprodukte (5) umfasst und eine Längsabmessung und eine Breitenabmessung aufweist, wobei die Breitenabmessung kürzer als die Längsabmessung ist, wobei der Umschlag eine Öffnung (12) aufweist, in der ein Randteil (5a1) des obersten der gestapelten Blattprodukte erscheint, und durch die es im Gebrauch zwischen den Fingern eingeklemmt wird,

wobei die Dimensionen der Öffnung in der Breite (X) größer als in der Längsrichtung (Y) sind; die Verpackung weiter einen Deckel (13) umfasst, der am Umschlag nahe der Öffnung zum Öff-

nen und Schließen angebracht ist, wobei der Deckel ein Basisteil (13b) und ein Abdeckungsteil aufweist;

der Deckel eine Klebschicht aufweist, die es ermöglicht den Deckel wiederholt von der Oberfläche des Umschlags abzuziehen und wieder darauf anzukleben, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** das Basisteil (13b) des Deckels am Umschlag entlang einer Seite der Öffnung (12) angebracht ist, die sich in der Breite (X) erstreckt.

2. Verpackung des Anspruchs 1, wobei:

die Blattprodukte (5) nasse Papiertücher sind.

3. Verpackung nach eines beliebigen vorhergehenden Anspruchs, wobei:

die Öffnung (12) einer ovalen bzw. elliptischen Form ist.

4. Verpackung eines beliebigen vorhergehenden Anspruchs, wobei:

die Dimensionen der Öffnung (12) 40 ± 3 mm und 30 ± 3 mm sind.

5. Verpackung eines beliebigen vorhergehenden Anspruchs, wobei:

die Klebschicht aus einem Selbstkleber besteht.

6. Verpackung eines beliebigen vorhergehenden Anspruchs, wobei:

der Umschlag (10) aus einer laminierten Folie einer Polyethylenterephthalatfolie, einer Aluminiumfolie und einer Dichtstofffolie geformt ist, und der Deckel aus einer biaxial gereckten Polypropylenfolie geformt ist.

Revendications

1. Emballage (10) comportant à l'intérieur une pluralité de produits en feuilles empilés l'un sur l'autre, l'emballage comprenant une enveloppe (11) destinée à loger les produits en feuilles empilés (5) et présentant une dimension dans le sens de la longueur et une dimension dans le sens de la largeur, la dimension dans le sens de la largeur étant inférieure à la dimension dans le sens de la longueur, l'enveloppe présentant une ouverture (12) dans laquelle une partie de bord (5a1) de celui des produits en feuilles empilés s'étendant dans le sens de la longueur (Y) qui est le plus élevé apparaît et à travers laquelle les doigts peuvent le pincer en utilisation,

dans lequel les dimensions de l'ouverture sont supérieures dans le sens de la largeur (X) à celles dans le sens de la longueur (Y) ;

l'emballage comprenant de plus une coiffe (13) fixée à l'enveloppe, adjacente à l'ouverture afin de la fermer et de l'ouvrir, la coiffe comportant une partie de base (13b) et une partie de couvercle ;

la coiffe comportant sur elle une couche adhésive permettant de fixer la coiffe à la surface de l'enveloppe et de l'enlever de manière répétée,

caractérisé en ce que la partie de base (13b) de la coiffe est fixée à l'enveloppe le long d'un côté de l'ouverture (12) qui s'étend dans le sens de la largeur (X).

2. Emballage selon la revendication 1, dans lequel :

les produits en feuilles (5) sont du papier de soie humide.

3. Emballage selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans lequel :

l'ouverture (12) est de forme ovale ou elliptique.

4. Emballage selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans lequel :

les dimensions de l'ouverture (12) sont de 40 \pm 3 mm et de 30 \pm 3 mm.

5. Emballage selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans lequel :

la couche adhésive est un adhésif sensible à la pression.

6. Emballage selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans lequel :

l'enveloppe (10) est formée d'un film laminé à partir d'un film de polyéthylène téréphtalate, d'un film d'aluminium et d'un film d'étanchéité, et la coiffe est formée d'un film de polypropylène bi-orienté.

5

10

15

20

25

30

35

40

45

50

55

Fig. 1(A)

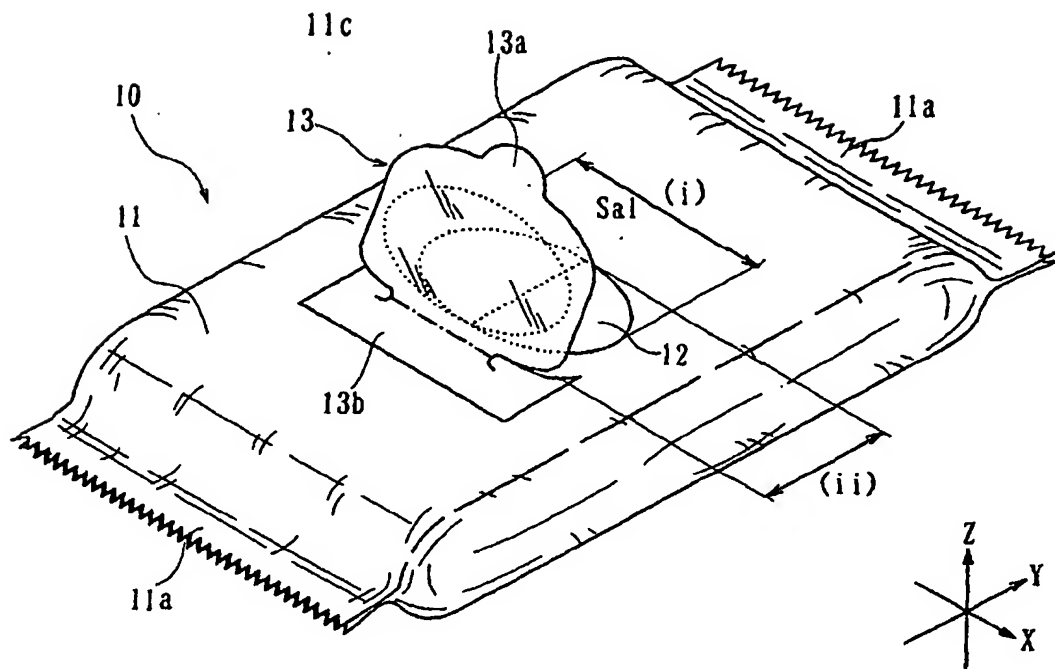
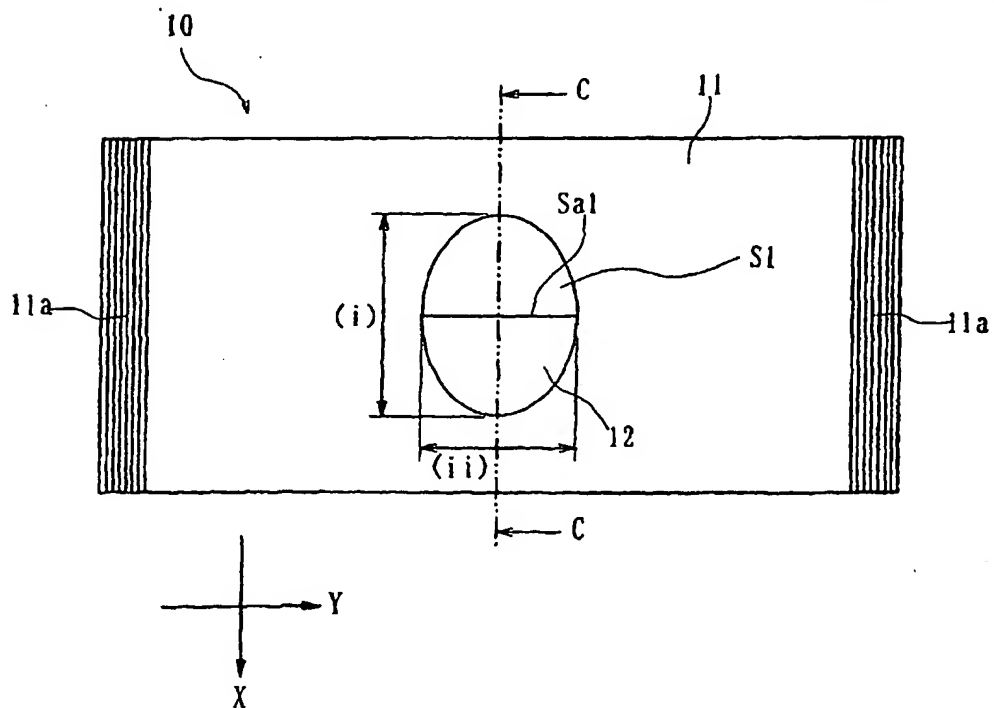


Fig. 1(B)



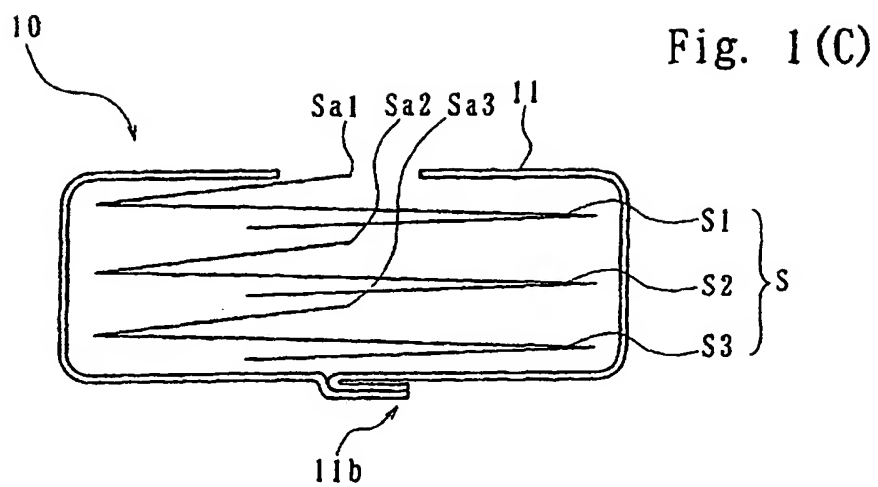


Fig. 2(A)

PRIOR ART

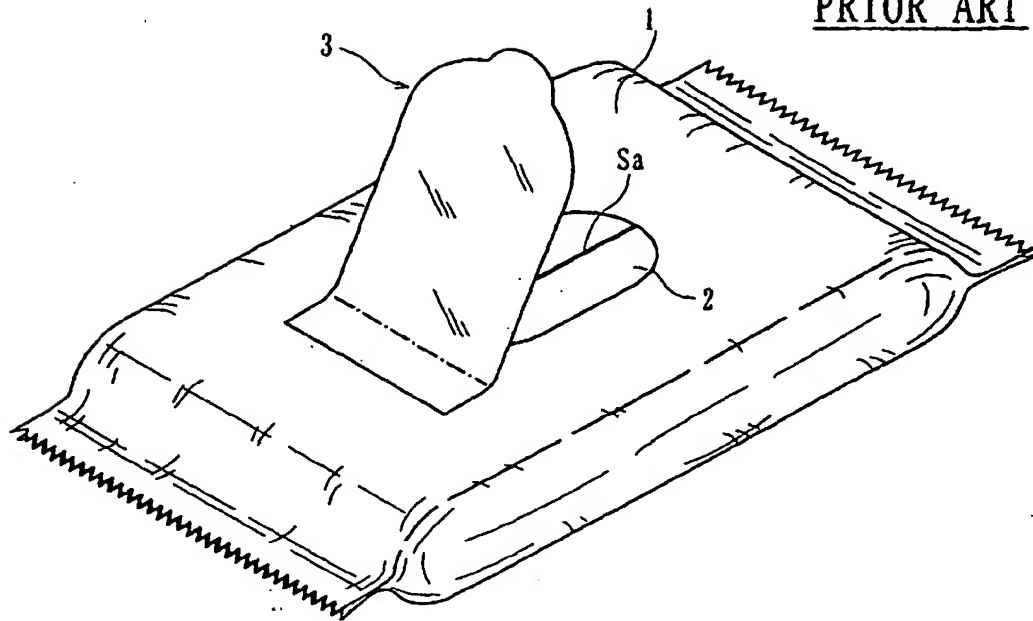
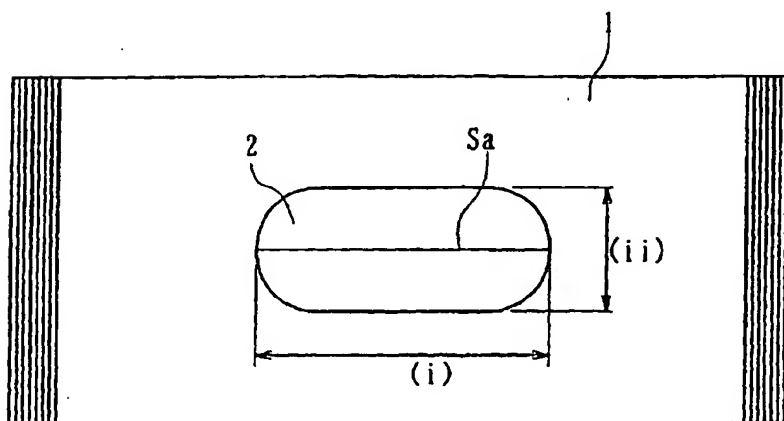


Fig. 2(B)

PRIOR ART



THIS PAGE BLANK (USPTO)